

Patients with Central Lines — What You Need to Know to Avoid a Bloodstream Infection

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC—safer, healthier people.

In 2009, about 41,000 hospital patients with central lines got bloodstream infections. Central lines are tubes that doctors put into a large vein – usually in the neck or chest – to give medicine or run tests. Because of major prevention efforts in hospital ICUs, there were 58 percent fewer bloodstream infections from 2001 to 2009. Despite progress, many infections still occur in hospitals and other settings, such as dialysis centers.

Here's what you can do to reduce your risk:

- Ask if a central line is needed and for how long.
- Make sure your doctors and nurses clean their hands before touching you or the central line.
- If you notice that skin around the central line is sore or red or if the bandages are wet or dirty, tell your doctor or nurse immediately.

To learn more about bloodstream infections in patients with central lines, visit www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7